



**ASHEVILLE TRANSIT COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Police/Fire Training Room-Municipal Building**  
**December 9, 2009 4:30-6:30**

**Attending:**

**Commission Members:** Josh O'Conner, Dave Erb, Hanna Raskin, Andrew Goldberg, Tom Tomlin, Karen Austin, J Neal Jackson

**Staff:** Mariate Echeverry, Edna Johnson, Janet GeorgeMurr, Yuri Koslen

**Community members:** Paul Van Heden; Heather Strassberg of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization; Geri Solomon; Tom Herman, NCDOT; Bette Jackson; David L. Elliston; Joy Bartlett

4:34 p.m.: Hanna opened the meeting.

**Agenda Amendments:** None

**Explanation of Public Comment Standards and Opportunities:**

- Josh read the standards of procedures regarding public comment.

**November 18, 2009 Minutes Review:** Per Tom, to correct Route 52 to Route 54 under Status of Intercity Routes. Hanna moved to have the November 18, 2009, minutes approved; second by Andrew and all in favor.

**Welcome Public – Introductions and Pre-Meeting Public Comment**

- Hanna welcomed the public with an introduction of each member of Transit Commission, staff and public. At this time, Hanna asked the public for any pre-meeting comments and none was given.
- Introduction of the public:
  - Joy Bartlett – 3 minute issue regarding consistency in leaving Transit Center. Enforcing the consistency of the bus driver when at the traffic light at Transit Center to either pick up people or not. Edna Johnson stated that most accidents occur at the traffic light at the Transit Center. Dispatch has control of the movement of the buses. This is a safety issue for the riders. Hanna requested Edna have the drivers to be consistent.
  - Paul Van Heden
  - David “Oscar” Elliston has a list of issues. Andrew asks David Elliston to meet with Transit Commission member or a staff member after the meeting.
  - Geri Solomon – issue is to have user friendly material for people of limited English skills.

**Farewell to Two Transit Commission Members:** Karen Austin and Andrew Goldberg's terms expire December 2009. Hanna presented gifts and thanked Karen and Andrew for their contribution to the Transit Commission during their tenure as commission members. Karen said that being on the TC was very rewarding. Andrew indicated that he learned a lot and enjoyed being a part of the process.

**Update from Transit Commission Members Work and New Business:**

- **New Transit Commission Members:** Hanna announced that applications for TC seats are due by January 6, 2010. A question was raised, if TC should endorse certain applicants who have applied for the TC positions (i.e., Paul Van Heden) or take a back seat. Josh mentioned that Dave Erb's suggestion in encouraging a resident from Housing Authority who rides the bus is a good idea.
- **Volunteer Program:** Mariate stated that she has not received a response from Legal regarding the liability, union and Risk Management to ensure that the Ambassador Program covers all of the important



issues before implementing. Hanna explained the Ambassador Program to Geri Solomon who suggested having a volunteer to be bi or tri lingual. Dave suggested to Geri to ask her group of international community for volunteers.

**Updates on Meetings with New City Council Members:** Andrew and Tom met with Council Member Ester Manheimer to discuss the Transit Master Plan (TMP.) Ms. Manheimer was very encouraging about the implementation and long term funding of the TMP. One of Ms. Manheimer's platforms was to have buses running on Sundays. She also indicated that two other Council members were pro-transit and she seemed knowledgeable that the route changes should be implemented ASAP and a good idea not to wait until July 1, 2010. Tom suggested moving the public hearing portion of the City Council meetings from 4pm to 6pm rather than 6pm or 7pm, since a majority of the public rides the bus. Dave met with new Council Member, Cecil Bothwell who is also involved in the Sierra Club along with Dave. Mr. Bothwell is very pro-transit; is knowledgeable of the Transit Master Plan, and suggests to the staff to pick the "low hanging fruit" of the TMP, i.e., routes changes, etc. Josh met with Gordon Smith who is very interested in TMP and he will try to "flush out" some budgetary funding.

- **Response to Letter to the Editor in Mountain X:** Josh responded to the editorial in the Mountain X to the gentleman who previously published a letter with misinformation on the TMP route changes and fares. Yuri has also been communicating directly with the gentleman.
- **Transit Commission Presentation Schedule:** Heather Strassberg confirmed that she would be speaking on MPO at the January TC meeting.
- **Goals Setting for 2010:** Josh suggested postponing this agenda item until January. Hanna suggested having the new TC members in place before proceeding to this subject. The Transit Master Plan will occupy a considerable amount of time with TC.

**Transit Commission Retreat:** Hanna suggested having a TC retreat on April 14, 2010, which will include the new TC members. Josh suggested agenda items for the retreat as follows: Implementation Plan of the TMP, International Community, Budget. Hanna suggested lobbying for transit money with Council. The last retreat was at Haywood Park Hotel, which was accessible to downtown and transit. Josh will look into a place at the Grove Park Inn and will place on TC January agenda. Mariate mentioned that the City would provide lunch. Mariate asked if TC would like to have a facilitator for the retreat, who will be objective. All were in favor and Mariate will look into this and will present at January TC meeting. Hanna asked if the Chairman of TC would meet with the facilitator. Tom asked if the public is invited. Mariate indicated that the public attended the last retreat. Hanna mentioned that the TC would be similar to the Council Retreat on January 8 and 9, 2010.

- **GPS:** Josh mentioned that there is a GPS device, at no cost, in which the public can access through [www.glympse.com](http://www.glympse.com) on their cell phones, to show buses in real time, through Google mapping. Hanna asked if this device could be donated to use for one day on the bus to check if this is in the best interest of transit. Paul Van Heden indicated that this device would be helpful to the rider if a bus was running early or late and that this device could be useful in the meantime until capital funds are provided. Mariate questioned the safety issue. Andrew suggested having staff try the GPS device on the bus. Hanna mentioned that this is a "no cost solution." Edna stated that the Voice Announcement System is a GPS for announcing stops and in the future, this current system could be built upon.
- **Transit Master Plan (TMP) Implementation Plan Schedule:** Hanna stated that City Council approved the Transit Master Plan and the Transit Master Plan Steering Committee (TMPSC) met in November. Mariate and Yuri brought TC up-to-date on the meeting. Mariate presented all the options (in attachment). Timeline is approximately 120 days to implement the on-time performance measures. The Steering Committee recommends the System Wide option to pursue the approval of City Council, which is the complete TMP to include every route. However, if Council does not approve the system wide implementation, then the option of dropping Route 6 to Airport at the cost of \$250,000 will be recommended. TMPSC recommended combining Routes 28 and 29. After a lengthy discussion among

staff and TC, Josh made the motion to endorse the recommendations of the TMPSC of the implementation plan on the system wide change, Dave second and all of TC was in favor.

#### **Update from Staff:**

- **Voice Announcement System:** Mariate announced that Digital Recorders would complete the voice announcement by February.
- **Consolidation Study:** Dave announced that he attended the Consolidation Study meeting. He felt that NCDOT would like to see the consolidation of the entities that includes Buncombe County, Henderson County and City of Asheville transit services. Dave mentioned the three focused items discussed were: do we cooperate; do we coordinate; or do we consolidate in one agency. Dave continued to say that the consensus of the meeting is to cooperate. Mariate mentioned that coordination will include development of other services.

#### **Summary:**

- Hanna mentioned that Route 13 – was parked at the Transit Center, the bus driver kept the bus doors closed during the freezing temperatures preventing anyone from getting on to stay warm. Edna responded that it was a practice to keep the vehicles locked until a driver was there to load. On this particular occasion, it was a personnel issue with a driver being late.
- Edna announced the Transit Center would have the same phone system as headquarters, which allows better usage of staff resources, which is limited. The phone system at the Transit Center is using wireless technology.
- Edna announced that the dispatchers attended a Customer Service training class sponsored by North Carolina Transit Association.
- Edna mentioned that the drivers are running “hot” (early) and are stopping for riders. Hanna will make a display for the Transit Center that the bus drivers will not pick-up riders if not at the designated bus stops. Yuri mentioned that most of the poor performance time is due to running early not late.
- Tom wanted to recognize Edna and the transit staff on the bus wrap for the Christmas parade and that there was honorable mention from the Christmas parade committee. Tom recommends doing this every year with the old bus that is stored at the garage. Yuri mentioned in researching the marketing, to make sure local agencies are in the parade as well.
- Hanna announced an event at Bo-Bo Gallery Friday December 11, 2009 at Green Drinks and the topic will be “What it is like to be a Board Commission.”
- Heather Strassberg will present on MPO at the January 13, 2010 Transit Commission Meeting.

#### **January 13, 2010 Agenda Topics:**

- Josh – to review TC applications
- Josh – to report on venue for TC retreat at Grove Arcade
- Mariate – TMPSC Implementation Plan schedule
- Mariate – update on legal aspect of using GPS device

6:27 p.m. Adjourned



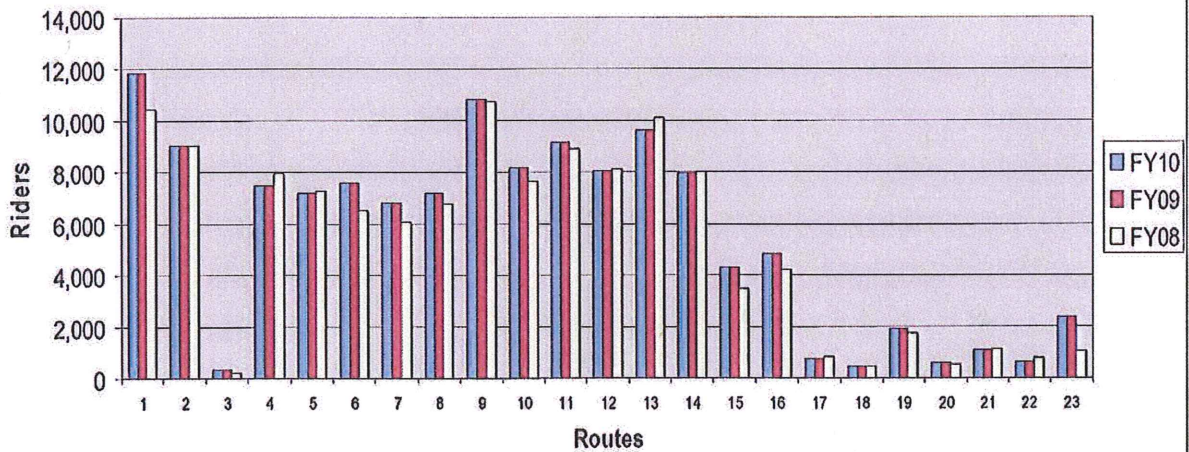
# Route Ridership-November, 2009

## Current Month

## Fiscal Year to Date

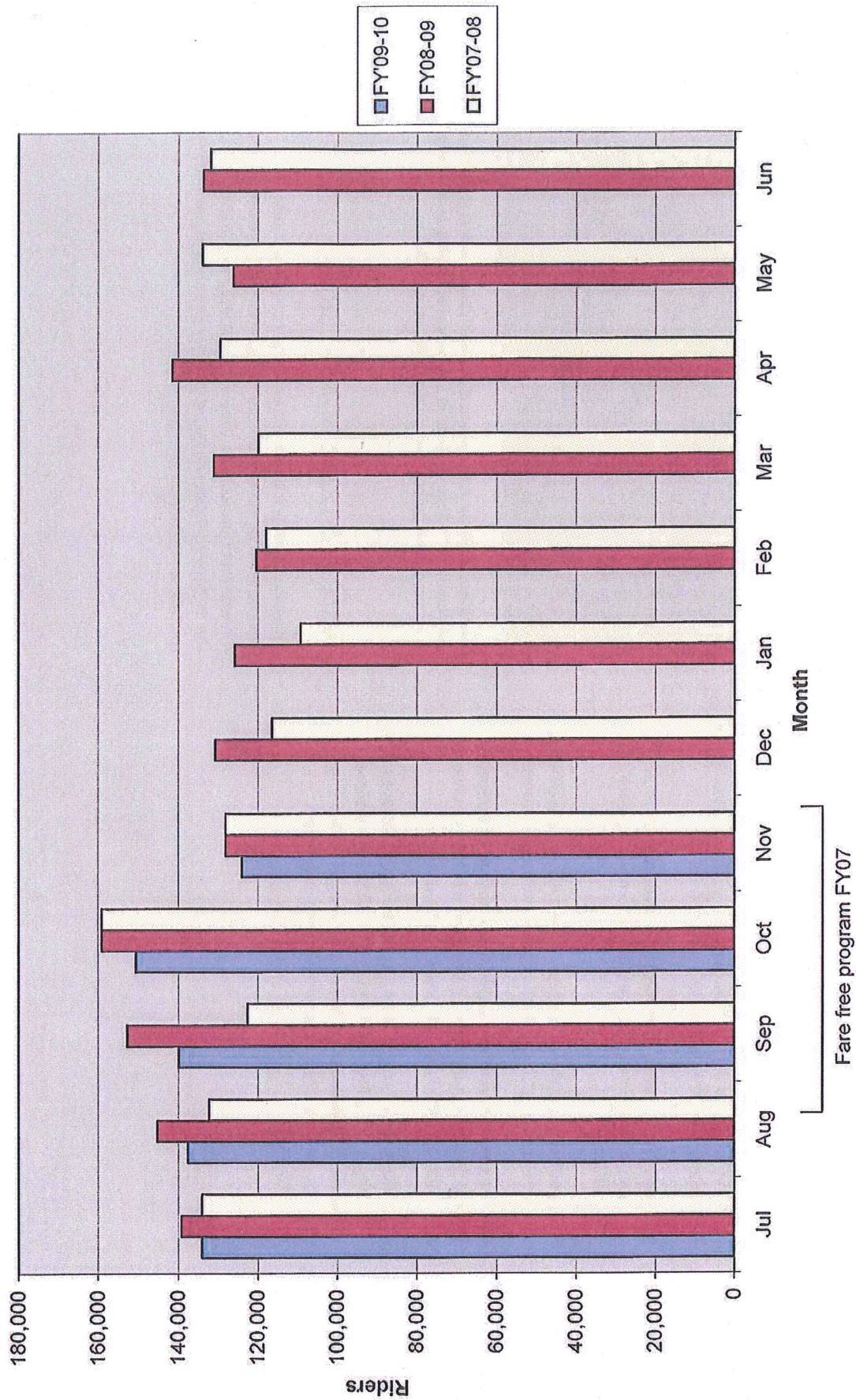
Route	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta
1	11,436	11,836	(400)	-3%	62,248	66,210	(3,962)	-6%
2	9,460	9,024	436	5%	47,954	52,015	(4,061)	-8%
3	327	329	(2)	-1%	1,563	2,284	(721)	-32%
4	7,708	7,494	214	3%	42,538	40,936	1,602	4%
5 & 16	7,509	7,203	306	4%	41,937	43,882	(1,945)	-4%
6	6,639	7,587	(948)	-12%	35,868	41,746	(5,878)	-14%
8	6,061	6,822	(761)	-11%	32,679	39,717	(7,038)	-18%
9	6,564	7,197	(633)	-9%	35,637	39,928	(4,291)	-11%
11	10,125	10,826	(701)	-6%	53,906	58,031	(4,125)	-7%
12	7,998	8,169	(171)	-2%	42,648	44,416	(1,768)	-4%
13	8,960	9,185	(225)	-2%	46,543	50,213	(3,670)	-7%
15	9,120	8,037	1,083	13%	52,274	48,332	3,942	8%
18	9,793	9,602	191	2%	53,323	54,335	(1,012)	-2%
26	8,647	7,972	675	8%	44,656	44,519	137	0%
28&28A	2,717	4,315	(1,598)	-37%	21,504	24,713	(3,209)	-13%
29	5,221	4,815	406	8%	27,297	25,789	1,508	6%
36	777	740	37	5%	4,774	5,498	(724)	-13%
38	697	450	247	55%	3,729	2,768	961	35%
41	1,777	1,899	(122)	-6%	11,114	11,815	(701)	-6%
46	501	561	(60)	-11%	3,174	3,810	(636)	-17%
51	943	1,062	(119)	-11%	6,239	6,552	(313)	-5%
52	587	618	(31)	-5%	3,358	4,561	(1,203)	-26%
54	473	2,341	(1,868)	-80%	11,297	12,374	(1,077)	-9%
Total	124,040	128,084						

Route comparison November FY10





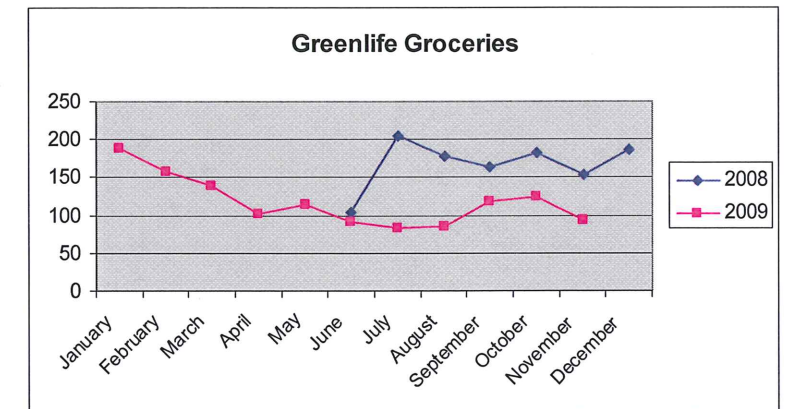
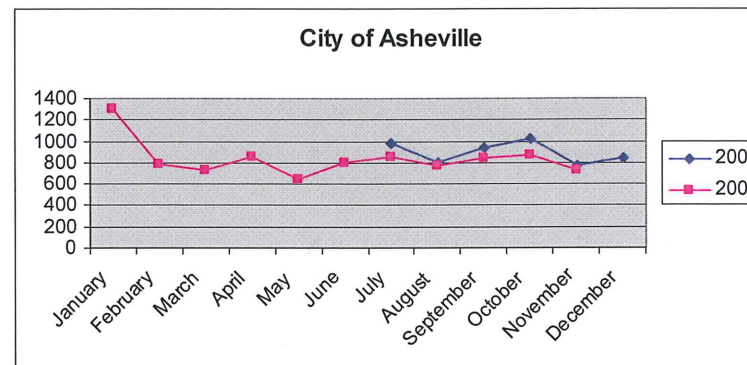
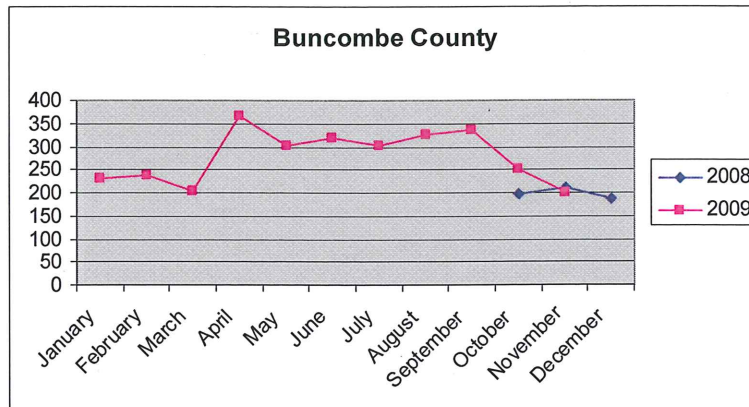
# Ridership Comparison



<b>Buncombe County</b>		
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
January		231
February		236
March		204
April		366
May		302
June		319
July		301
August		324
September		334
October	195	251
November	209	199
December	187	
<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>3067</b>
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>3658</b>	<b>6725</b>

<b>City of Asheville</b>		
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
January		1306
February		779
March		733
April		850
May		643
June		793
July	976	857
August	797	774
September	940	844
October	1018	873
November	770	735
December	835	
<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>5336</b>	<b>9187</b>
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>14523</b>	<b>23710</b>

<b>Greenlife</b>		
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
January		188
February		156
March		138
April		101
May		113
June	103	90
July	205	82
August	177	84
September	164	117
October	181	125
November	152	93
December	185	
<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>1287</b>
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>2454</b>	<b>3741</b>





<i>Greenlife</i>		
	2008	2009
January		188
February		156
March		138
April		101
May		113
June	103	90
July	205	82
August	177	84
September	164	117
October	181	125
November	152	93
December	185	
<b>Year Totals</b>	1167	1287
<b>Overall Totals</b>	2454	3741

<i>Grove Park Inn</i>			
	2007	2008	2009
January		1993	1592
February		2156	1198
March		2225	1305
April		2128	1386
May		2356	1366
June		2298	1509
July		2520	1345
August		2494	1387
September		2659	1376
October		2552	1410
November	1268	1863	1042
December	1969	1676	
<b>Year Totals</b>	3237	26920	14916
<b>Overall Totals</b>	30157	57077	71993

